



Meeting Minutes: Governor's Committee on the Safety, Health, and Wellbeing of Agricultural and Food Processing Workers

DATE: 11/22/2021

MINUTES PREPARED BY: CINTHIA MARTINEZ

Attendance

Committee Members

Present

Colin Laffey, Staff Attorney, Agricultural Worker Project, Southern Minnesota Regional Legal Services (SMRLS)

Emilia Gonzalez Avalos, Executive Director, Unidos MN

Hamse Warfa, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Jim Gleb, President, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1189

Kiza Olson, CHS Administrator, Meeker-McLeod-Sibley Community Health Services

Nicole Blissenbach, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

Rena Wong, Director of Organizing, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 663

Rodolfo Gutierrez, Executive Director, HACER

Sarah Berry, Public Health Director, Waseca County | CHS Administrator, Le Sueur – Waseca Community Health Board

Stephanie Low-Interim Executive Director/ Chief Medical Officer, Community Health Service Inc.

Susan Bishop, Supervisor, Minnesota Department of Health, and Migrant Agricultural Worker Response Lead, ICS

Absent

Andrea Vaubel, Deputy Commissioner, Minnesota Department of Agriculture

Dan Glessing, President, Minnesota Farm Bureau

Gary Wertish, President, Minnesota Farmers Union

Tamara Nelsen, Executive Director, Minnesota AgriGrowth Council

Staff Present: Cinthia Martinez, CareerForce Office Coordinator, Minnesota Department of

Employment and Economic Development; Jessica Grosz, Director of Labor Standards and Apprenticeship, Minnesota Department of Labor, and Industry; Lorrie Janatopoulos, CareerForce Director, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Maureen Ramirez, Director of the Office of Economic Opportunity, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development; Mike Zastoupil, Food Access Associate, Minnesota Department of Health

Agenda

1:00 PM **Welcome**

1:05 PM **Guest Introductions**

1:10 PM **Approve Minutes & Agenda**

1:11 PM **Updates – DC Warfa**

1:15 PM **Housing Work Group Recommendations update**

1:25 PM **AWWC Recommendations Vote**

2:30 PM **AWWC Report Overview**
2:45 PM **Public Comments**
2:55 PM **Final Thoughts & Next Steps**
3:00 PM **Adjourn**

Meeting notes

Guest Introductions

Amber Glaeser, Director of Public Policy, Minnesota Farm Bureau

Erik Zabel, Epidemiologist Principal, Minnesota Department of Health

Approve Minutes & Agenda

Approved.

Updates- DC Warfa

During today's AWWC meeting the committee will spend most of its time reviewing, discussing, and voting on the finalized recommendations that were included in the PowerPoint sent by Maureen Ramirez on Friday. Roll call voting will be conducted and the results will be recorded in the minutes but not in the report to the Governor. Following the voting, Maureen Ramirez will briefly discuss the report that will be sent to the Governor on December 1st.

Housing Work Group Recommendations Update

The housing Work Group met on Friday to finalize the recommendations, based on feedback received at the last AWWC meeting. Updates to the recommendation included rewording to address the complicated housing issues in MN with a "broader brush" and moving the shortage of housing issue to the recommendation section.

Committee member Emilia brought up that homeownership is an important path to safety, health, and wellbeing for workers, particularly food processing workers who live year-round and currently own mobile homes in mobile parks.

AWWC Recommendations Vote

A majority vote will be taken on the recommendations by the Committee. Members were given the option to vote on each individual recommendation or in categories/themes. The Committee opted to vote by themes. The themes include Communication, Housing, Workplace Safety, and Fair Labor Standards. The Voting process will go as follows: Maureen Ramirez will read the group recommendations; DC Warfa will ask for a motion to vote and open for discussion. Cinthia will then begin the roll call and record the votes.

Theme: Coordination & Communication

Motion to Vote: Jim moved, Susan Second.

Discussion: None

Vote:

- Sarah Berry - Yes
- Susan Bishop - Yes
- Nicole Blissenbach - Yes
- Jim Gleb - Yes

- Emilia Gonzalez Avalos – Yes
- Rodolfo Gutierrez - Yes
- Colin Laffey - Yes
- Stephanie Low - Yes
- Tamara Nelsen - Not present
- Kiza Olson - Yes
- Andrea Vaubel – Not present
- Gary Wertish – Not present
- Dan Glessing – No present.
- Rena Wong – Yes
- Hamse Warfa- Yes

Theme: Housing

Motion to Vote: Rodolfo moved, Nicole second.

Discussion:

- Idea shared on making sure that we are providing support to workers as we provide support to the employers.
- There is still work to be done on how “How”.

Vote:

- Sarah Berry - Yes
- Susan Bishop - Yes
- Nicole Blissenbach - Yes
- Jim Gleb - Yes
- Emilia Gonzalez Avalos – Yes
- Rodolfo Gutierrez – Yes
- Colin Laffey - Yes
- Stephanie Low - Yes
- Tamara Nelsen – Not present.
- Kiza Olson - Yes
- Andrea Vaubel – Not present.
- Gary Wertish – Not present.
- Dan Glessing – No present.
- Rena Wong - Yes
- Hamse Warfa – Yes

Theme: Workplace Safety

Motion to Vote: Jim moved, Sarah second.

Discussion:

- Important to consider how the employers will receive the information the right way.

- Recommendation is meant for DLI to help employers meet the requirement, specifically providing them with translated materials in various formats.

Vote:

- Sarah Berry - Yes
- Susan Bishop - Yes
- Nicole Blissenbach - Yes
- Jim Gleb - Yes
- Emilia Gonzalez Avalos – Yes
- Rodolfo Gutierrez - Yes
- Colin Laffey - Yes
- Stephanie Low - Yes
- Tamara Nelsen - Not present
- Kiza Olson - Yes
- Andrea Vaubel – Not present
- Gary Wertish – Not present
- Dan Glessing – No present.
- Rena Wong - Yes
- Hamse Warfa – Yes

Theme: Fair Labor Standards

Motion to Vote: Rodolfo moved, Susan second.

Discussion:

- Members of the committee discussed aligning definitions. Changes will be made to align them.
- Question on if mile requirement is needed?
- Could the AWPA definition be used?
- Members support voting on recommendation with amendment language added to include traveling.

Vote:

- Sarah Berry - Yes
- Susan Bishop - Yes
- Nicole Blissenbach - Yes
- Jim Gleb - Yes
- Emilia Gonzalez Avalos – Yes
- Rodolfo Gutierrez - Yes
- Colin Laffey - Yes
- Stephanie Low - Yes
- Tamara Nelsen - Not present
- Kiza Olson - Yes
- Andrea Vaubel – Not present

- Gary Wertish – Not present
- Dan Glessing – No present.
- Rena Wong - Yes
- Hamse Warfa – Yes

AWWC Report Overview

In addition to the changes discussed, there is one amendment that was voted on today that will be added to the recommendations. Before sending them to the Governor on the December 1st deadline, the recommendations will be sent to the Governor's policy team.

Public Comments

No one from the public commented.

Final Thoughts & Next Steps

DC Warfa would like to express gratitude for all of the hard work and dedication put forth by this Committee. The next AWWC meeting will be on December 6th. At that meeting, there will be an update on the recommendation submission.

Adjourn